

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4044

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5057

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PO

SUBJECT: GOP SHIFTS THE DAY AFTER: STATUS REPORT

REF: A. LISBON 5054 B. LISBON 5055

1. THE MOOD TODAY IN PORTUGAL SEEMS TO BE ONE OF STOCK TAKING. "THE 9" ARE LICKING THEIR WOUNDS AND ATTEMPTING TO BUILD THEIR MILITARY SUPPORT. AS OF NOON TODAY THE MILITARY LINEUP DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THAT WHICH WE REPORTED YESTERDAY, ALTHOUGH CHAVAIS HAS GIVEN A SOMEWHAT WISHY-WASHY INTERVIEW SAYING AZEVEDO DOES NOT SHARE VIEWS OF GONCALVES
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GOVERNMENT AND GONCALVES ACCEPTENCE IN MILITARY WOULD DEPEND

UPON HIS POLICIES.

2. THE GONCALVES FORCES ARE PLAYING IT COOL, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME HINTS OF RESTRUCTURING THE MILITARY, BUT NO SPECIFIC ANNOUNCEMENTS TO DATE. EVEN THE COMMUNIST DOMINATED NATIONAL RADIO STATION IS LOW-KEYING THE SHIFTS. IT MAY BE, AS ONE OF "THE 9" TOLD US, THAT GONCALVES IS LOOKING FOR A FIGHT, BUT HE SHOWS NO SIGNS OF INVITING ONE SO FAR. WHY SHOULD HE? HE HAS EMERGED IN A LARGELY CEREMONIAL POSITION WHICH A MAN WITH HIS DRIVE, SKILL AND IMAGINATION CAN PROBABLY CONVERT INTO A REAL BASTION OF POWER.

3. THE MYSTERY IS WHY COSTA GOMES DID THIS. EVERYBODY IN THE ANTI-COMMUNIST CAMP IS SHAKING HIS HEAD. "A LUTA" EXPRESSED IT WELL IN A CARTOON SHOWING COSTA GOMES IN UNIFORM SALUTING VASCO GONCALVES IN MUFTI. LATTER IS PUTTING MATCH TO A POWDER KEG. EITHER COSTA GOMES IS UNBELIEVABLY NAIVE AND INEPT, OR HE IS BEING BLACKMAILED, OR HE IS IN LEAGUE WITH GONCALVES AND HIS CROWD. WHILE HIS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STATEMENTS DO NOT SUPPORT EITHER OF THE LATTER TWO HYPOTHESES, PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO WONDER ABOUT HIS ACTIONS.

4. NOR HAS HE RESOLVED HIS POLITICAL PROBLEMS. LEAVING ASIDE THE POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES GONCALVES CAN CREATE IN HIS NEW POSITION, THERE REMAINS THE QUESTION OF FORMING A GOVERNMENT. IT SEEMS CLEAR FROM COSTA GOMES CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR (REF. A) AND SOARES (REF. B) THAT HE WAS COUNTING HEAVILY ON SOCIALIST PARTICIPATION IN AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT TO PRESERVE WHAT HE MIGHT INGENUOUSLY HAVE REGARDED AS AN ACCEPTABLE BALANCE OF FORCES. HE WAS SO DESPERATE THAT HE PROMISED SOCIALISTS A MAJORITY IN THE GOVERNMENT - EVERY NON-MILITARY POST EXCEPT 3 (TWO FOR PPD AND 1 FOR COMMUNISTS). BUT SOARES REFUSED THE BAIT. HAD HE ACCEPTED THE TEMPTING OFFER THE ANTI-COMMUNIST EFFORT WOULD SHURELY HAVE FOLDED.

5. THIS LEAVES COSTA GOMES OUT ON A LIMB. WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE SOCIALISTS OR PPD (WE ARE SURE PPD WILL FOLLOW THE PS EXAMPLE) AZEVEDO CAN ONLY PUT TOGETHER ANOTHER GOVERNMENT OF "TECHNICIANS" WHICH WILL BE ENTIRELY LACKING IN CREDIBILITY AND POLITICAL FORCE. EVEN IF HE MANAGES TO EXCLUDE SOME OF GONCALVES

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COMMUNIST LINING CRONIES IN PRESENT GOP, AND WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT HE NOW HAS EITHER THE DESIRE OR CAPACITY TO DO THAT, HE CAN ONLY PUT TOGETHER A SHAM GOVERNMENT.

6. IN SUM, THE POLITICAL IMPASSE CONTINUES, BUT, TYPICALLY, THE COMMUNISTS ARE IN THE BEST POSITION TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. GONCALVES IS IN A POSITION OF POWER, COSTA GOMES HAS CEDED MOST OF HIS AUTHORITY AND INCREASED HIS OWN POLITICAL VULNERABILITY,

THE COUNTRY HAS A WEAK PRIME MINISTER WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT AND THE ANTI-COMMUNISTS ARE AGAIN IN A STATE OF DISARRAY. THE NINE STILL HAVE IMPORTANT RESIDUAL ASSETS IN THE CONSERVATIVE POPULATION, THE SOCIALISTS POPULAR BASE, THE MODERATE OFFICER CORPS AND IMPLICIT SUPPORT FROM THE CHURCH AND THE WEST, BUT THE PROBLEM REMAINS, AS ALWAYS, HOW TO CONVERT THESE ASSETS INTO EFFECTIVE POLITICAL WEAPONS AGAINST A DETERMINED MINORITY THAT REFUSES TO RELAX ITS GRIP ON THE KEY LEVERS OF POWER. IN MY JUDGEMENT WE HAVE PASSED THE POINT WHERE AN ANTI-COMMUNIST POLITICAL STRATEGY CAN SUCCEED WITHOUT A GREATER SHOW OF NAKED POWER AND SHEER GUTS THAN "THE 9" HAVE DEMONSTRATED SO FAR. THIS WILL REQUIRE NOT ONLY HOLDING THEMSELVES TOGETHER IN THE FACE OF STRONG PRESSURES TO COMPROMISE BUT ALSO MAKING MORE EFFECTIVE AND COORDINATED USE OF THEIR TOTAL ASSETS, PARTICULARLY SOARES AND HIS PARTY, THAN THEY HAVE TO DATE. A LARGE TASK.

CARLUCCI

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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